

Sisters' Department.

FOR JESUS SAKE—THE CHRISTIAN RACE.

SELECTED BY MRS Z. H. COPP.

"So run that ye may obtain. 1 Cor. ix, 24."

Behold! the race course here before us lies;

See! many running for the glorious prize;

Some sweat and toil, and manger all their pains,

Small is their progress, smaller still their gains.

With weights oppress'd, of sordid gold and care,

They run awhile, then give up in despair.

But one is seen whose speed outstrips the wind,

The laggards all he quickly leaves behind;

Conform'd to rule, he casts all burdens down,

And presses forward to receive the crown.

In his exhortations to Christians, the great apostle of the Gentiles very often alludes to the Olympic games. These games were celebrated in different parts of Greece, particularly on the isthmus which joined the Morea to the main land; hence called the Isthmian exercises. They were held on the banks of the river Alpheus, near Olympia, a city of Elis. They were considered of so much importance, that from the period of their first regular establishment a new era of reckoning time was constituted, just as we reckon from the birth of Jesus Christ. Each Olympiad consisted of four years; hence they dated events from the first, second, third or fourth year of any particular Olympiad. The first Olympiad commenced 776 years before the Christian era. These exercises consisted of five different kinds, viz.: boxing, wrestling, leaping, the quoit, and racing. We confine ourselves to the illustration of the latter. The celebration of the running match excited great interest. Hence, the preparation for these festivals was very great. No man could become a candidate for the prize unless he bore a good character, and regularly exercised himself ten months previously, according to the rules prescribed.

The rules were very severe; a strict

regiment had to be observed, unpalatable food to be eaten, abstinence from all luxuries; exercises were to be continued through all weathers, and we know not what besides. And now the grand day has arrived; the judge is appointed, having been previously sworn to deal impartially; the race course is cleared, the place of starting fixed, the judge takes his seat at the goal, or end of the race ground, and holds in his hand the crown of olive, or of laurel, destined to grace the victor's brow; officers are appointed to keep order. The city is emptied of its inhabitants; all the principal men are there. The candidates make their appearance; every eye is fixed upon them, every heart is in motion. Divested of all needless clothing, sometimes naked, they await the signal; 'tis given—off they start. Not a whisper is heard among all that multitude; with intense interest they watch the runners as they pass along. A shout is heard. The victor returns, like a triumphant conquer, drawn in a chariot of four, wearing the crown of victory, and is everywhere greeted with the acclamations of the people. Religion is compared to a race; the *stadium*, or race-ground, is the path of piety leading through this world to the next; the runners are those who profess religion; the officers appointed to keep order, the ministers of the Gospel; the spectators, men and angels; the judge, the Lord Jesus Christ; the reward, a crown righteousness.

Let us imagine a company of young persons just commencing the Christian race. They set off together; the directions are given to all; they are four in number: 1 Be sure to lay aside every weight; 2 Relinquish the besetting sin; 3 Exercise patience; 4 Look to Jesus. They go along pretty well for awhile. Soon one is seen lagging behind. What is the matter? He has too much weight about him. Another drops off; his besetting sin has prevailed. A third is missing; what ails him? O, he is out of patience—with God, himself, and everybody besides. Some follow the directions, persevere to the end, and obtain the prize. But mark; of those who run in the Grecian games, one only could receive the prize. In the Christian race, all may run so as to obtain. The

judge there was sometimes partial; the Christian's Umpire is the "*Righteous Judge*." The successful candidate, after all his labors, obtained only a garland of withering flowers; the Christian receives a glorious "crown of righteousness that fadeth not away."

Children's Department.

Cornell, Ill., Dec. 20, '93.

DEAR EDITOR:—This is my first letter. I am eleven years old. I go to school every day, I am in the fourth grade, and I read in the third reader. My teacher's name is Jessie Ebers, and I like her very well. Papa, mamma, and all of my sisters, and one of my brothers belong to the Progressive church. Yours truly,

BENJAMIN F. MAST.

[This is a capital letter. Can we enroll you as one to write a letter to us once a month this year? We want regular letter writers for the children's page. Ed.]

Phoenix, Arizona.

DEAR EDITOR:—This is my first letter for a paper. I am eight years old. I have one brother thirteen years old and two sisters younger than myself. I have no mother. I go to school in Phoenix. We came from Chicago two years ago. I like it much better here. I have seen the sun all but two days since I came here. Four mountain peaks have snow on. They are eighty miles from here. I can see them plain by moonlight. We now have strawberries, tomatoes, peaches, watermelons, peas and roses. The frost makes some of the leaves fall off. Some of the boys go barefoot all winter. We raise oranges and figs in our yard. I go to Sunday school.

MAMIE HADSELL.

How nice it is that we can write letters and talk to each other although we live so far apart. I know all the children enjoy your letter, Mamie, so, write again. There are other little boys and girls who read this that have no mother. It is sad to be without a mother. But then it is God's will that some of us do without a mother. The best thing for us to do then is to listen to papa or some other friend.